



# Magnolia

*Magnolia grandiflora*  
The Laurel Tree of Carolina  
Catesby's *Natural History*, 1743

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## *The New Louisiana Gardener: Containing the Instructions Needed for those who Garden*

by Sally Kittredge Reeves, Notarial Archives, New Orleans, Louisiana

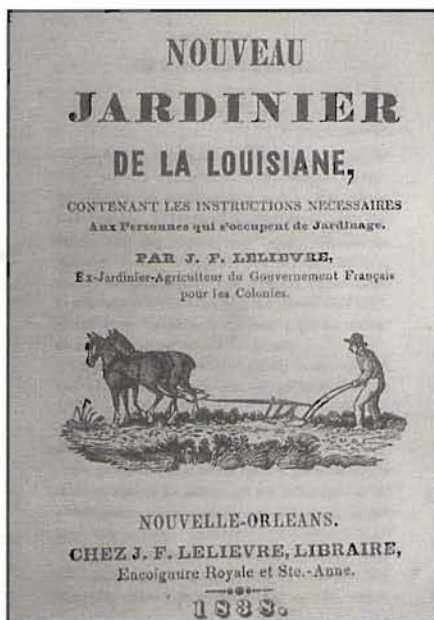
**S**outhern Garden History Society members and others in garden history circles have known about Jacques-Felix Lelièvre's 1838 *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane* for a long time. Indeed, ours is not the first attempt to translate this volume. Fifty years ago, the WPA began a translation but did not publish the results, and this

come to fulfillment as a published book? Aside from their not having the tenacious backing and encouragement of the Southern Garden History Society—which has been critical to this project—some of the text's internal difficulties may have presented obstacles to its translators. For the *New Louisiana Gardener, Containing the Instructions Needed by Those Who Garden*, is perplexing at first.

Dr. William C. Welch did the writer the supreme courtesy at one point in the course of this undertaking of declaring that the introduction to the translation is more important than the text itself. This was a flattering hyperbole, but his remark gets at the essence of the project we are unfolding this year. For without explication, the text tends to disappoint our hopes that it would unearth some marvelous old secrets about Louisiana's horticultural past. In short, it did not seem to stand on its own.

There were a number of reasons. First, the book begins with a somewhat wearying treatise on astronomy that continues twenty-three pages before it turns to horticulture. Second, the text is heavy on the cultivation of vegetables as opposed to ornamentals, which for many are of greater interest today. Further, there is considerable emphasis on instructions for grafting and pruning fruit trees, and not everyone today can use these on the scale that the author assumes. In addition, there is only a little in the book for those whose interest is period garden design. Finally, modern scholars have already found and used the ornamental plant lists the book does

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Frontispiece, *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*.  
Courtesy Tulane University Special Collections.

writer elected not to look at it. We are also aware of two more recent efforts with this text by individuals. One wonders, why have none of these attempts

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## CALENDAR

**April 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2000.** "A Focus on Plants - History, Culture and Future," the 54<sup>th</sup> Williamsburg Garden Symposium. Features garden historians, nurserymen, and educators, including John Elsley of Wayside Gardens; Robert E. Lyons, director, J. C. Raulston Arboretum; Greg Grant, Austin State University; and Peggy Cornett of Monticello. For more information on Williamsburg Institute programs, call (800) 603-0948, or visit their web site: [www.history.org](http://www.history.org)

**April 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2000.** The Florence Hand Lecture, Flower Show and Tour, at Hills and Dales, the home and garden of the late Mr. and Mrs. Fuller E. Callaway, Jr. in LaGrange, Georgia. The first annual Flower Show will benefit the Florence Hand Home Charitable Trust. For information, call (703) 845-3600 or visit: [www.wghs.org](http://www.wghs.org)

**May 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 2000.** 18<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, Mount Vernon, Virginia. Meeting chair is J. Dean Norton, director of horticulture at Mount Vernon. Dean is planning an exciting venue for SGHS members, and promises to top the last meeting hosted by Mount Vernon. (See article in this issue.)

**June 11<sup>th</sup>-June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2000.** "Preserving Jefferson's Landscapes and Gardens," Historic Landscapes Institute co-sponsored by University of Virginia and Monticello. An introduction to landscape history, garden restoration, and historical horticulture by using Monticello and UVa as case studies and outdoor classrooms. Check Monticello's calendar of events page, [www.monticello.org](http://www.monticello.org) or contact Peter Hatch, (804) 984-9836; [phatch@monticello.org](mailto:phatch@monticello.org)

**August 26<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup>, 2000.** 2<sup>nd</sup> biennial "Historic Plants Symposium" of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Details to be announced.

**November 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2000.** "The Colonial Revival in America," Conference co-sponsored by the National Park Service and the University of Virginia's departments of Landscape Architecture and Architectural History. Submit one-page proposals for papers (30 minutes in length) and brief resume by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 to: Colonial Revival Conference, School of Architecture, UVa, Charlottesville, VA 22903. For information, contact Richard Guy Wilson at (804) 924-6462; [rgw4h@virginia.edu](mailto:rgw4h@virginia.edu)

**May 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, 2001.** "Pocosin to Parterre: Landscapes of the Carolina Coastal Plain," the 19<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society at Tryon Palace, New Bern, North Carolina. This meeting will explore the varied landscapes of the coastal region, from unique natural features to high style gardens. The program also includes a visit to historic Edenton. The meeting coordinators are Carlton B. Wood and Perry Mathewes. For more information, contact Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens, (800) 767-1560.

**October 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 2001.** 9<sup>th</sup> International Heritage Rose Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. This conference will focus international attention and educate the public on the historic contributions of Charleston as the source of the Noisette rose, the first class of rose to be developed in America. Hosted by Ruth Knopf; honorary chairs: Mrs. Joseph H. (Patti) McGee and Mrs. Alexander Sanders. Contact Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, P. O. Box 975, Charleston, SC 29402. Phone (803) 853-8000.

**April 18<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002.** 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Southern Garden History Society in Natchez, Mississippi. Dr. Elizabeth Boggess, meeting chair, is planning a special anniversary event.



## The New Louisiana Gardener...

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contain. One may very well ask why we need an English translation of this book at all!

We need, of course, to see it in its entirety, not in bits and pieces. By determining the book's scope and emphasis, noticing what it omitted, and trying to appreciate what the author assumed about his readers' knowledge or ignorance of gardening technique, we can learn more about the state of horticulture in one Southern locality. We can also make good use of the book's period species descriptions in the study of historic plants. Knowledge of the author's biographical and intellectual background will reveal the skills and point of view that he brought to the undertaking. Finally, by putting the *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane* into a local context; explaining the horticultural, socio-economic and even political environment in which Lelièvre wrote, we will come to a better appreciation as to what it was really contributing. The introduction to our translation, which LSU Press will publish next year, attempts to supply this context.

As a whole, the *Nouveau Jardinier* is a passionate attempt by a trained, French-born horticulturist to share the blessings of progressive French science with what he knew to be a Francophile American audience. New Orleans, with both a Creole and a foreign-born French population, was one of the few places in the United States he could expect to find such readers. As do some other New World guides, the book presumes a need to adapt European technique to American soil. More specifically, however, it seeks to adapt French technique to a warm climate. Lelièvre was not a great writer—he was probably a better horticulturist—but his four-page Introduction aptly summarized his book. In it, he pointed out that the great French works on agriculture, natural history and horticulture had “left nothing to desire” in the way of instruction. Still, they were too large and heavy for someone to carry around in the garden, and moreover were not adapted to warm climates. He argued that some of the species he had listed, particularly fruit trees, were not being cultivated in Louisiana, but not because they could not succeed there. In his view they had not been managed as well as they might, had not been acclimated with enough perseverance, or had not been grafted onto native stock. Tools such as grafting and acclimatizing were among the arsenal of the French horticulturists Lelièvre cited, people who were also skilled at pruning, and not least, timing. Timing meant not just planting at the right moment, but also managing the rise of sap. This explains to some extent the astronomical parts.

The astronomical parts are formidable, almost bizarre. Their unfamiliarity to our modern sensibilities, however, should tell us something. They may be rather like the “Great Cat Massacre” of eighteenth-century France, which historian Robert Darnton brilliantly explicated.<sup>2</sup> His thesis was that when evidence from the past fails to make sense in current

terms, the scholar should perceive an opportunity to unravel new and possibly profound insights about the culture being studied. Perhaps this is so with Lelièvre's essays on the solar and lunar years, or his discussion of the Golden Number. The Golden Number is an astronomical conceit that first counts a cycle of nineteen years. At the end of the cycle a year unfolds when the new and full moons appear—he refers to this as “returning”—on the same day and nearly the same hour of each month. The Golden Number serves in turn to calculate a thing called the Epact, which in turn serves to calculate the phases of the moon.<sup>3</sup>

Lelièvre also presented an essay on the Dominical Letter. This item enables us to figure out when it will be Sunday. For those who need to know this, there is a chart of all the Dominical letters between 1838 and 1847. After that, he offered a six-page chart of every saint's day for the entire year. That he did not explain why a gardener needs all this information gives us a clue to his assumptions. The most obvious is that it was patently customary to sow at the full moon. Perhaps it was also customary to harvest certain vegetables on so-and-so's feast day.

On page twenty-four the author finally commenced his discussion of horticulture. In a long and wonderful chapter, he talked about soils, water, drought, air, heat, hotbeds, shelving beds, plowing and hoeing, weeds, insects, rodents, and soil enrichment. He then presented the traditional calendar of what to do when each month of the year. At that point he provided more general instructions, discussed vegetables, and preached at length about the cultivation of fruit trees.

Lelièvre arrived at his first discussion of individual vegetables on page sixty-three. He discussed fifty-two of them in alphabetical order, an arrangement we followed, knowing the list would end up out of order in English. Vegetables, along with fruit trees, were the most important plants to the author, and he devoted the heart of the book to them. These were what he emphasized, what he knew the most about. He assumed that his readers shared this primary interest.

One of the most interesting vegetable discussions to this writer was the article on cabbages. It included both winter and summer kinds, including the Battersea, St. Denis, Bonneuil, Dutch, Alsatian, German, Drumhead,



French cabbages. Author's collection.

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Glazed, and Milanese, for market gardening. For the first harvest of the season, Lelièvre recommended the small early York, and for late harvests, the Quintal. For dairy farms, he



*The Small Early York. Author's collection.*

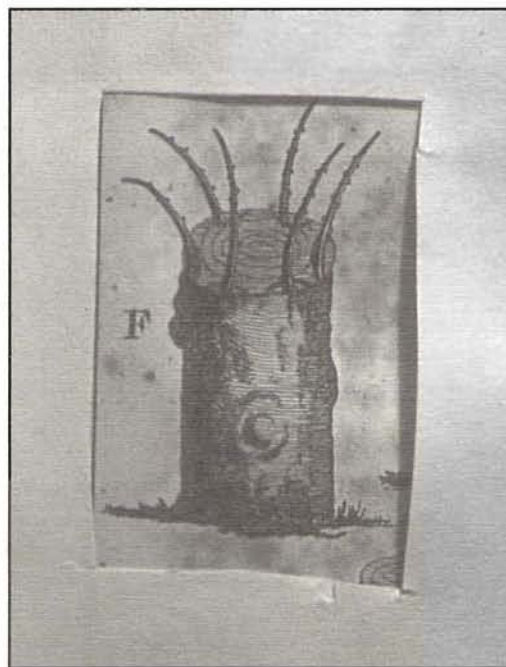
recommended the Cavalier cabbage, which he characterized as never heading, but producing growth up to eight feet high in the summer. "This forage is nourishing," he wrote, "and greatly increases the milk of cows. After a frost, it makes excellent vegetarian soup, and its spring shoots make the best broccoli after those of the Malta."

After finishing with vegetables, Lelièvre devoted a long chapter to a discussion of fruit trees. He talked about training them in espalier, grafting, and most importantly, pruning them. This chapter reveals the most about his intellectual background and motivations. In it, the author showed some impatience about the state of cultivation of fruit trees in Lower Louisiana, "below Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupée." He characterized the trees in those parts as "très négligés" [quite neglected], a rather puzzling indictment in light of Louisiana's century-old orange industry and the region's abundance of figs, pomegranates, persimmons, and pear trees. It was nevertheless astonishing to Lelièvre that "a country so rich in vegetation" as Louisiana "should be deprived of the succulent fruits" that places both farther North **and** farther South had. The Caribbean islands, he pointed out, had nearly all the fruits grown in Europe, while in Louisiana, "even the oranges hardly produce."<sup>4</sup>

The problem, as he saw it, was not with the climate, but that growers were not using scientific methods of grafting, pruning, and training on trellises to control and even thwart the movement of sap to a better purpose. He might have also noted that growers relied too much on the sour orange, which is quite hardy, but inedible raw. Also, that occasional but regular dips of the mercury below freezing usually killed the sweet oranges, whereupon farmers tended to start all over again. This happened to New Orleans grower Louis De Feriet

in a freeze of February 20, 1823, and to all the other orange growers of lower Louisiana at that time, as west bank planter Nicholas Noel d'Estréhan recorded in his diary.<sup>5</sup>

Lelièvre's remark about the trees "hardly producing" may seem unfair, but only until one reads some of his sources on the subject of grafting. One of these was André Thouin, chief gardener at the turn of the nineteenth century at the *Jardin des Plantes*, formerly the *Jardin du Roi* or King's Garden on the left bank in Paris. From his base at the *Jardin*, Thouin experimented, demonstrated grafting and pruning techniques, and published instructions to increase and maintain output.<sup>6</sup> He simplified into three main types the more than 135 named grafts that Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau had described during the eighteenth century in a famous treatise on fruit trees.<sup>7</sup> Thouin urged his readers never to wait until the orange tree matured (some eight years) to expect fruit, when one could hasten the era of fructification by cleft-grafting a flowering branch onto a young trunk of two or three years. This technique even had a name, *greffe en fente à oranger*.<sup>8</sup>



*Greffe en fente à oranger; designed for cleft-grafting the sweet orange to the sour orange. Author's collection.*

In addition to grafting, French horticulturists were masters at the art of pruning, the *taille*, from *tailler*, to trim or shape. Lelièvre treated this subject at length in the chapter on fruit trees. As he explained it, the *taille* involved identifying and

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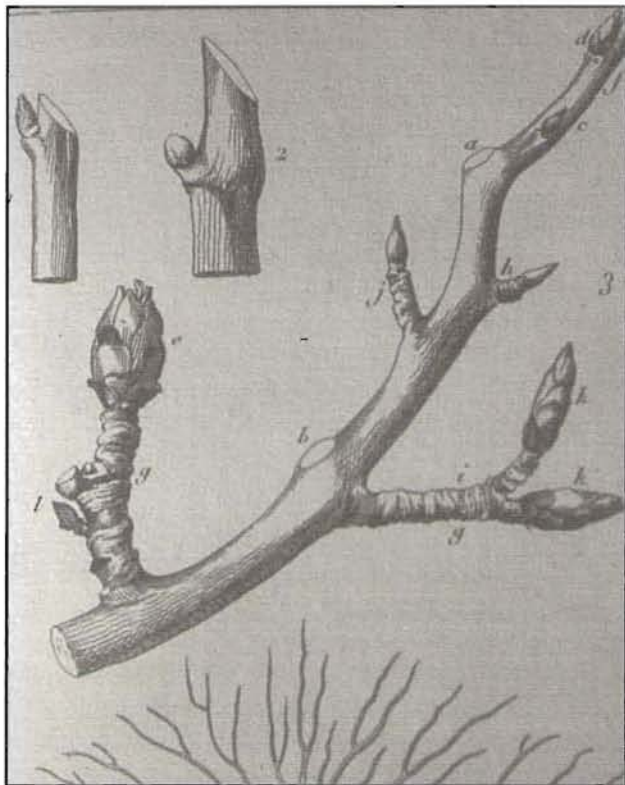


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encouraging on the branches of the tree, fruit-producing buds, which are fat and round, and shaping, or distorting their subsequent branches. At the same time, the gardener should suppress—but not completely—wood buds, which are long, pointed, and vigorous, and give rise to healthy looking trees with less fruit. It is true that the French were known for stylized pruning to achieve landscape effects as practiced on



The fruit bud, which is "round and fat." Author's collection.

the estates of the wealthy and at the gardens of Versailles. To the progressive French horticulturist dedicated to disseminating improved agricultural techniques for the betterment of society, however, the *taille* was useful less for ornamental purposes than it was to increase production for ordinary gardeners. They needed the skill to get fatter and better grapes for wine-making, and to better manage their orchards.

If the climate was too hot or cold to grow certain species successfully, one could also achieve better results by employing French-style modifying techniques. Since the seventeenth century, the French had been acclimatizing to the colder Parisian climate, tropical species collected for the *Jardin du Roi* by botanists such as Father Charles Plumier and Joseph de Tournefort.<sup>9</sup> A new genre of building, the *serre* or greenhouse, had developed from Olivier de Serre's early descriptions in *Le Théâtre d'Agriculture*, published in 1600.<sup>10</sup>

Typically, the French soon developed the use of the *serre* into an art, dividing the main types into *serre chaude*, *serre froide*, *serre tempérée*, *serre aquatique*, *bâche*, and *orangerie*, depending on the amount of effort expended in keeping the building warm in winter. Louis Noisette, the tireless French horticulturist, writer, and brother of Philippe, described them meticulously in his four-volume *Manuel Complet du Jardinier*, published in 1825 and aimed at market gardeners, nurserymen, botanists, florists, and landscapers. For example, the *serre tempérée* was an angular glass building with a rear wall sloped 45 degrees. The temperature inside was kept constant by means of hotbeds and a furnace manned throughout the night in winter. On the other hand, the *orangerie* was less utilitarian looking and frequently architect-



Louis Noisette, French nurseryman, author, and brother of Philippe. Author's collection.

designed, with graceful arches and soaring roof-lines that had to clear the highest branches by three or four feet. It faced the south, was kept dry inside, and was sometimes dug out at the bottom. All of this reduced the need for extra heating. The *caisse à oranger* also passed into the culture at this time. This was a large, ornamental box capable of holding orange trees,

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oleanders, palms and pomegranates, all of which gardeners transported into the *orangerie* for overwintering. They may be found today in public gardens all over Europe.

Lelièvre mentioned the *serre* in his book and used the derivative verb *serrer*, to store, ignoring the fine distinctions that the French made among types. He presumed his reader's knowledge and use of the *serre*, along with the *cloche*, the bell cover. He saw fit, however, to define and explain how to assemble the *couche*, the hotbed, and the *chassis*, the cold frame. He also defined the *ados*, or shelving bed. Note that all these devices are useful against cold rather than hot weather. For summer Lelièvre suggested the free standing *hangard*, a word usually translated *shed* in English, but his description of how to build this appurtenance makes it clear that he is talking about a lath house. Lelièvre's rather picturesque lath house will be covered with straw or palmetto leaves, which however, one must remove during heavy rains, "lest the water form gutters across it, fall down like a jet and uproot the plants."

Cold-weather appurtenances such as the *serre* may have been more important in Europe than they were in the mild Louisiana climate, but New Orleans gardeners were known to have them. For example, George T. Dunbar, a Baltimore native, civil engineer, and railroad surveyor who completed several plans now in the Notarial Archives collection, had one



George T. Dunbar's home and greenhouse, with a curious gazebo. Formerly on Common Street in what is now downtown New Orleans. Detail, Plan Book 13, folio 1. Courtesy New Orleans Notarial Archives.

at his home on Common Street<sup>11</sup> during the 1840s. Dunbar maintained some 200 *Camellia japonicas* and other ornamental plants and garden structures in the greenhouse and on the grounds of the home.<sup>12</sup>

Another interesting example of the *serre* in antebellum New Orleans was that of Louis de Feriet. De Feriet was the owner of a *guildive* or rum distillery in the Faubourg Clouet, about a mile and one-half downriver from the Vieux Carré in

New Orleans (now in the Third District). A French émigré and former baron from Metz in Lorraine, de Feriet settled in New Orleans in 1803 and two years later married Maria de la Merced St. Maxent, the daughter of a wealthy Creole. His home and its elaborate garden, which he began to assemble about 1820,<sup>13</sup> could have stepped right out of Lorraine. The property included a two story *orangerie*-like greenhouse of generous forty by eighteen-foot dimensions, roofed partly with slate and partly with sash. In proper form, it had a southern exposure, and its rear wall was adjacent to the stables, a good source for manure.<sup>14</sup> De Feriet also had a pecan orchard in the rear of his property with trees arranged in rows, and shipped barrels of nuts to New York and Havana. The chief objects of his horticultural affections, however, were his orange trees, which all died as noted earlier in a great freeze of February 1823. De Feriet soon replanted the trees, which were growing well by June of the same year, but which were probably small for a long time.

In the front of his Dauphine Street complex were two geometrically arranged *par terres* leading to a *parterre de broderie*, with serpentine lines. Among the plants in these ornamental sections were verbena, arbor vita, moss rose, dwarf banana trees grown from seed, and the "Mexican lily," perhaps *alstroemeria*, which the French called *lis des Aztecs*. "I often have visitors," he wrote to his sister in 1838, "ladies and gentlemen who admire my garden extravagantly, which has nothing very unusual in it, although they say it does."<sup>15</sup>

De Feriet had added the greenhouse in a period of prosperity in 1835 to protect his plants both from cold and from what he called the "dog days" of summer. He enlarged it in 1837 and again the following year, and built a small rail spur to transport his large potted oranges, lemons, and guava trees inside,<sup>16</sup> just as the French did in Paris. His own statement makes it clear that his greenhouse was designed to modify both winter and summer conditions for his plants, words that would have been *magic* to Lelièvre. DeFeriet may well have been one of the "experienced growers" who supplied Lelièvre with local information whenever he lacked experience, so he said.

Where Lelièvre seems to have had the least experience was in the growing of ornamentals, *plants d'agrément*. He did not include a single word about flowering plants until page 156 of the 200-page book. This feature of the nineteenth-century American manual is in stark contrast to the content of a twentieth-century manual such as Stewart and Oser's 1952 *Gardening in New Orleans*, which has no *vegetable* discussion at all. Lelièvre actually felt it necessary to make a case for his ornamental plant discussions when he arrived at them. "Flowers also merit the attention of the gardening enthusiast," he wrote. They are the most beautiful ornament in the garden

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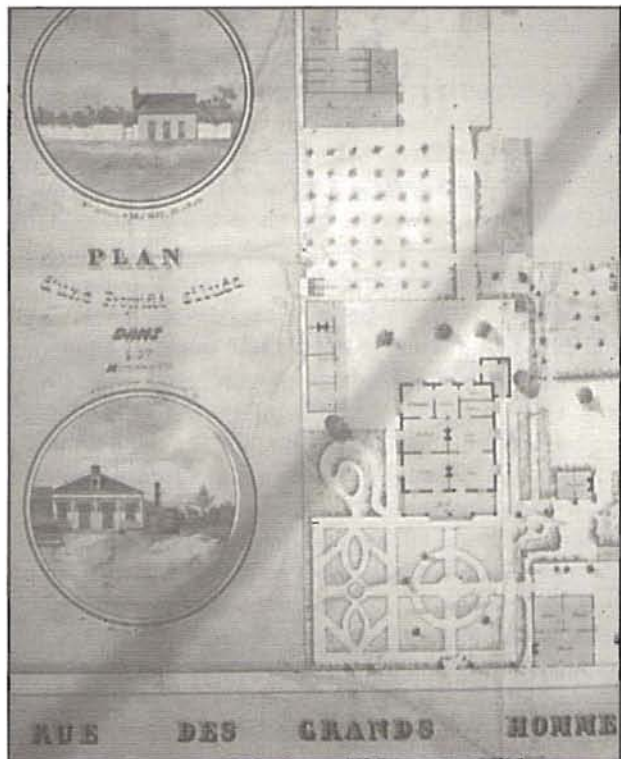


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..." (p. 156). "The culture of flowers is one of the principal branches of the art of the gardener, and the most difficult."



Louis de Feriet house in New Orleans with ornamental gardens, lower right; greenhouse, upper left; orange orchard, upper center. De Feriet built the greenhouse to protect his plants both from cold and from "the dog days of summer." Plan Book 21, folio 23. Courtesy New Orleans Notarial Archives.

In addition to probably getting local advice on ornamentals, Lelièvre clearly used a particular French gardening manual as a handbook in this area. It was probably in stock right in his bookstore on Royal Street. He had acquired this shop by purchase, marriage, and inheritance in the short span of four years after his first arrival in New Orleans as a friendless immigrant in 1834. Born in Caen, a town of about 100,000 in Normandy, Lelièvre apparently received enough education to get an appointment as horticulturist for the colonies for the French government. He probably also learned horticulture from his father, a gardener in Caen. He migrated to America in search of a better life at a time of economic stress in the middle class in France, and soon received work as a clerk in the bookstore. Within a year, he had married the divorced sister of the owner, who was also the niece of the store's late founder, Charles Jourdan. Jourdan was a cranky old French bibliophile who died in 1834 just before Lelièvre's arrival. He had left his store in a state of unmitigated confusion at the time of his death, and Lelièvre

found his first New Orleans employment there straightening out the stock and preparing a sale catalogue. In a strange twist of fate, he became sole owner of the store after both the brother-in-law and Lelièvre's wife died within three years of each other and their interests in the business fell in turn to him. At the age of forty-three, four years in New Orleans, Jacques-Felix Lelièvre became sole owner of a long-established business dealing in books, stationery, seeds, and fancy goods on one of the busiest corners in New Orleans, Royal and St. Ann.

Store records<sup>17</sup> show that in spite of Jourdan's unpredictable personality, he had had a good business. Reorganized by the next generation, it became more prosperous still, enabling Lelièvre to try his hand at some publishing. This was a common practice at the time among Parisian booksellers such as Bossange Frères, Deterville, or Alexis Emery, and New Orleans booksellers followed suit. When something local was needed like a schoolbook or a local history, Creoles wanted these things to be in French, both because that was their language, and because it was important to keep *les Américains* from stealing a march in the struggle for cultural ascendancy in New Orleans that culminated in 1836 when the city broke into three political subdivisions. There also was a very good local market for books printed in France. Notarized inventories of estates show over and over again that among the Creole population it was *de rigueur* to have in one's library the latest Parisian editions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French writers such as Voltaire, Fenelon, LaFontaine, or Rousseau. They also favored popular nineteenth-century editions of comic theater, poetry, and romance novels.<sup>18</sup>

One of the many Parisian-based titles in the Jourdan store inventory was something Lelièvre referred to as *Le Jardinier Almanach*, literally "The Gardener Almanac," the actual title of which was *Le Bon Jardinier, Almanach Pour* [whatever year it was]. *Le Bon Jardinier* is an annual horticultural encyclopedia that has been published in Paris since 1755.<sup>19</sup> It has appeared regularly from the eighteenth century up to our time. It is clear from internal evidence that Lelièvre had the 1836 or perhaps an earlier edition in his possession. He may have carried one to New Orleans, or he could have ordered some for the store from the Parisian publisher Audot.

The *Bon Jardinier* is a marvelous compendium of horticultural knowledge. Each edition provided the latest information on flowers, forestry, experiments with plant diseases, tools, soil analysis, latest grafting techniques, and so on. One issue might report on European flower shows of the day, featuring the latest cultivars. Dahlias were immensely popular, and pinks (*les oeillets*). New roses that judges considered successful were listed. The judges admitted ninety-

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one new roses in 1836. The heart of each edition—many of which run to 1000 pages—was a complete list of all known fruit trees, vegetables, and flowers, arranged by families, with instructions for their cultivation. There are long indices, charts of saints' days, and of course the Golden Number for each year.

Although he seems to have provided his own text for vegetables, Lelièvre borrowed heavily from this guide for his ornamental plant descriptions. His flower text came nearly word-for-word from the 1836 *Bon Jardinier*, after allowing for a pattern of shortening and removing foliar descriptions from the source material, and moving forward the recommended sowing dates. Lelièvre did not include Latin names for his flowering plants, but the *Bon Jardinier* did. Once it became clear that he had plagiarized the latter somewhat, it proved to be the Rosetta Stone for this project. This was a breakthrough, because it gave proof as to which species the author actually meant by some of the common French names he used. For example, he discussed *Alcée de la Chine*, which the *Bon Jardinier* tells us is *Alcea rosea sinensis*, or French Hollyhock. That was an easy one, because the phrase is in all the French dictionaries, and anyway Lelièvre described the flowers as *panachées de blanc et de pourpre* (variegated with white and purple), so one knew what it was. In a harder case, he described a white flower called *Thlaspi*. This was not in any of the writer's four French dictionaries, nor in any she could beg or borrow. For nearly two years, before the discovery of the *Bon Jardinier*, we thought we were going to have to leave this one to posterity. However, the *Bon Jardinier* finally identified *Thlaspi* as *Iberis semperflorens* L., and from the Latin, the way opened up to candytuft.

While the writer eventually checked all the plant names through the three-step process—from the French in the *Nouveau Jardinier* to the corresponding French and then Latin texts in the *Bon Jardinier*, and from there to the English in *Hortus*, the proper interpretation of some French names was intuitive. *Belle de jour* [Beauty of day] was obviously morning glory; *Belle de nuit*, four o'clocks.

Lelièvre's taxonomically unsystematized plant listings can be confusing to the reader. Most of his entries describe species, but the list sometimes jumps without warning from the species to the family level. For example, it passes directly from a discussion of the species *Cacalia sagittata* to a remark about the *cacti* family being "very numerous." The taxonomical change is obvious now, but the ability to interpret such subtleties in the text came slowly. A glance at the source material, however, reveals that the 1836 *Bon Jardinier* has seven pages on *Cacti* and points out that more than 200 species were known at that time.<sup>20</sup> Lelièvre's decision to summarize the family when he arrived at it reinforced further the understanding—after it was noticed—that he was shortening and summarizing from a source rather

than composing his own list of ornamental plants from scratch.

Lelièvre might also describe a family under one letter of the alphabet and a species of the same at another, for example *Fleurs de la Passion*, a.k.a. *Grenadille* or Passionflower. He listed this under F for *fleurs*, describing the entry as having large and beautiful flowers pleasantly varied in color and succeeded by fruit "as big as an egg," a phrase lifted directly from the *Bon Jardinier*. He recommended sowing it in mellow soil along a wall, or arbor, or on a palisade. He also noted that a dozen or so species of this plant were known. Several pages later, in the P's, he described *Passiflore*, which also translates passionflower. For the second time, he noted that it had magnificent flowers that go to fruit, and was a climbing plant suitable for covering arbors or *tonnelles*, as the French called them. This was confusing for a long time—had we not already covered this item?

In addition to the Passionflower vine, Lelièvre recommended that gardeners cover arbors with the *Chèvrefeuille* or honeysuckle, the *Dolique* or hyacinth bean, or any of the *Liseron* family, which would include *Convolvulus tricolor* (dwarf morning glory) or an *Ipomoea* such as cypress vine. The author referred to the *tonnelle* repeatedly. They also appear frequently in the civil engineers' drawings of the New Orleans Notarial Archives. The *tonnelle* was evidently an important feature of nineteenth-century New Orleans landscapes.

The author did not address the issue of landscape design directly, so it is in these kinds of oblique references that one must interpret his assumptions about spatial issues. Hints in the text make clear that one plants flowers normally in a *par terre*, although the *platte-bande*, or flowerbed is available. In the flower garden, one should vary the colors and arrange the plants according to size, placing the larger ones at intervals far enough apart to allow for smaller ones between. One should also plant as symmetrically as possible. In this writer's view, this makes Lelièvre a Classicist, because following these steps would allow a viewer from the right vantage point to take in the scene at a glance. Such an arrangement would militate against a Romantic approach, holding that one should have to walk in the garden to see it. In any case, Lelièvre recommended that in every part of the garden one should plant flowers that bloom in successive seasons, "so one does not see one end of the bed empty out while the other is covered with flowers."

Lelièvre also went to some length to recommend planting vegetables in squares, although archival drawings show us that New Orleans market gardeners more often laid out their vegetables in rows. He also presumed that everyone had plenty of sun and that except for the "coco vine," the landscape was under control. Somehow this assumption does

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## The New Louisiana Gardener...

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not ring true today in lush lower Louisiana. It may ring truer in France, with its lovely fields of lavender and sunflowers planted in rows, and its well-pruned grape orchards.

Is this text more valuable as a witness to the state of ornamental horticulture in antebellum New Orleans, or to that in post-Restoration France? In considering this question, one might reflect that the author had considerable latitude in his choice of entries. While the *Bon Jardinier* treated 1700 plants, Lelièvre discussed only 90 ornamentals, 52 vegetables, and 4 kinds of fruit trees. His selections are testimony to the ornamental plants that he either found in use in New Orleans, or judged amenable to trying there. In the Introduction, the author wrote the following:

"I have spoken of some plants little or not at all used in Louisiana, but which might be cultivated here with success, the richness of the soil permitting all expectations when the plants entrusted to it are managed according to wisely combined principles of cultivation."<sup>21</sup>

If there is a sentence that sums up this book, that is it. Lelièvre expressed a sense of frustration at the many plants not used in Louisiana. One gets a sense that he felt a calling to rectify this omission.

A second marriage to Olympe Mougneau of New Orleans brought Lelièvre a new set of relatives and help with the bookstore when he traveled abroad with his wife on buying trips. Madame Lelièvre's sister Elizabeth Georgette Mougneau was in charge of the store during one of these excursions in 1854 when Lelièvre died in Bordeaux at the age of fifty-nine. Lelièvre's estate inventory revealed that the Bookstore of J. F. Lelièvre at 210 Royal, corner St. Ann, was stocked with nearly 15,000 books when he died.<sup>22</sup> After that, Olympe Lelièvre and Georgette Mougneau went into business together, expanded it, and carried it forward for decades. Not until 1880 did the family finally get title to the locale they had occupied as a business for eighty years, when the Wardens of the Cathedral finally sold them land they had controlled since the 1730s. The Lelièvre bookstore survived there until 1894. A successor bookstore was still operating there in the 1960s. The building, reconstructed by the Wardens of St. Louis Cathedral in 1834, still stands.<sup>23</sup>

Through writing, publishing, book-selling and family life, Jean-Felix Lelièvre took his place in the intellectual ferment that was New Orleans in its antebellum period. In the widest context, he was part of the movement that impelled thousands of middle-class Frenchmen to head for New Orleans in the aftermath of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Once there, each contributed in his or her own way to the spread of French ideas and the growth of French culture there. In a narrower sense, Lelièvre stepped – it seems effortlessly – into the world of French book-selling in

New Orleans, and held his own for the rest of his relatively short life. The lives of his two wives bracketed his own career in the city, one laying the groundwork for his activities there, and the other carrying on his name and his business for years after his death.



Lush Louisiana. Does the *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane* ring true?

In the world of horticultural writings, Lelièvre's book was both path-breaking and sequential. It was the first of its genre in Louisiana, not a *flore Louisianais*, which had already been attempted,<sup>24</sup> but a working manual. It was the first and one of only two books on Louisiana gardening to be written in the nineteenth century—a time when horticultural writing was in ferment both in Europe and in America. Yet, it was not cut from whole cloth. It drew on the spirit of eighteenth-century France and the *writings* of nineteenth-century France. It formed a bridge from the findings of the Abbé Rozier, André Chaptal, Duhamel du Monceau, Dumont de Courcet, Louis Noisette, André Thouin, and others to an American audience. It translated their thinking in espousing a philosophy that urged the gardener to acclimate new species and improve native ones by applying scientific methods of managing both plants and the environment. This would serve them to better advantage rather than gardening by the cubit, by rule of thumb. In the final analysis, if in mirroring early nineteenth-century French horticultural thinking the flavor of the *Nouveau Jardinier* seems more European than Old South, so does New Orleans. Jacques-Felix Lelièvre did his part to make it so.

[A Presentation for the Southern Garden History Society  
Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, March 27th, 1999. Revised  
August 3rd, 1999 for publication in Magnolia. ] ♣

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The New Louisiana  
Gardener:....  
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## End Notes

1. The *Nouveau Jardinier's* ornamental plant list has functioned for a long time, along with Affleck's Catalogues and Almanacs, some Louisiana Courier articles, and some letters and diaries, to authenticate period floral arrangements and historic garden plantings in Louisiana. Landscape historian Suzanne Turner has relied upon it in part to reconstruct the historic gardens of the 1831 Hermann-Grima House in New Orleans, and Charlotte Seidenberg noted carefully in her *Gardening in New Orleans* whenever a flowering plant or shrub had appeared in the *Nouveau Jardinier*.
2. Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes of French Cultural History*, (New York, 1985).
3. To find the Golden Number, add 1 to the number of the year in question, and divide by 19. To find the Epact, subtract 1 from the Golden Number of the present year, multiply the rest by 11, and then divide the product by 30. One may then add the number of the Epact to the number of months that have elapsed in a given year, subtract a lunaizon, (a lunar month) and thereby arrive at the day of the month when there will be a new moon. This works, however, only for the months of March through December. For the other two months, there is a different formula. Once one finds the date of the new moon, one can add 15 to find the date of the full moon, if the new moon is set to arrive before the 15<sup>th</sup>. If not, one must subtract the 15.
4. *Nouveau Jardinier*, p. 130.
5. [Nicholas Noel d'Estréhan], "Naissances, Mortalités, et autres Notes" [entry for February 20, 1823], d'Estréhan Papers, Historic New Orleans Collection.
6. *Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle, Appliqué aux Arts, Principalement à l'Agriculture et à l'économie rurale et domestique: Par une Société de Naturalistes et d'Agriculteurs* (Paris: Deterville, 1803), II: 154; 155-193; Ad. Davy de Virville, *Histoire de la Botanique en France* (Paris, 1954), 99.
7. Duhamel made five divisions of graft types, identifying the *approche* (approach), *fente* (cleft), *couronne* (crown), *flute* (flute) and *écusson* (bud) types, each of which had numerous subdivisions. There were some 135 types in all, many named for their inventors. Thouin further analyzed the types, identifying those that united parts of trunks, branches, stems, or roots; those that separated ligneous parts from one specimen and placed them on another, and those that united gemmes or eyes, lifting the eye with the portion of bark that surrounds it and putting it onto another specimen. Louis Noisette, *Manuel Complet du Jardinier, Pépiniériste, Botaniste, etc.* (Brussels, 1829), pp. 206-255, especially 215. This is a one-volume summary of Noisette's 4-volume work issued in Paris, 1825-26 (translator's collection). A copy is available at the Missouri Botanical Garden. See also, Henri-Louis Duhamel du Monceau, *Traité des arbres fruitiers contenant leur figure, leur descriptions....* (Paris, 1768).
8. André Thouin, "De la greffe des arbres," in *Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle, Appliqué aux Arts, Principalement à l'Agriculture et à l'économie rurale et domestique: Par une Société de Naturalistes et d'Agriculteurs* (Paris: Deterville, 1803), II: 134.
9. Marguerite Duval, 1912- *The King's Garden*. Translated from *La Planète des fleurs* by Annette Tomarken & Claudine Cowen. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1982, p.35.
10. May Woods and Aarete Swartz Warren, *Glass Houses* (London, 1988, 1900, p. 16-17.
11. This part of Common St. is now Tulane Avenue.
12. The Dunbar home site has been the site of Hotel Dieu Hospital since soon after Dunbar's death in 1851. See inventory of estate., Jacob Soria, N.P. February 6, 1851. See also W. H. Peters, N.P., July 20, 1855; R. Brenan, February 2, 1853; Plan Books 13, folio 1; 13, folio 6; 64, folio 16, New Orleans Notarial Archives.
13. Michel de Armas, N. P., November 24, 1819, Notarial Archives.
14. "Plan d'une Propriété Dans le 3.M Municipalité," Plan Book 21, [Jacques] dePouilly, May 8, 1847; A. Mazureau, N.P., December 8, 1842, Notarial Archives; De Feriet Papers, Tulane University Special Collections Ms. # B350, letters Nos. 3 (11/12/1816); 23 (1/20/1821).
15. For discussion of plants grown, see De Feriet Papers, Letter No. 3 (November 12, 1816); No. 26 (May 10, 1822); No. 30 (September 21, 1822); No. 178 (June 28, 1838).
16. De Feriet Papers, Letters Nos. 178 (June 26, 1838).
17. "Charles Jourdan v A.L. Boimare" and A.L. Boimare v. Charles Jourdan, 1<sup>st</sup> JDC # 6079, New Orleans Public Library.
18. See, for example, Inventory of Dr. Yves Lemonnier, Octave de Armas, N.P. Oct. 3, 1834; Inventory of the estate of Mme. Elizabeth Boré Gayarré, H. Lavergne, N.P. Jan. 23, 1823.
19. "Notice Historique, in *Le Bon jardinier*" (Paris, Librairie agricole de la Maison Rustique, 1964, p. IV).
20. Ibid., 1836, p. 824-831.
21. Introduction, *Nouveau Jardinier de la Louisiane*, p. vi.
22. A. Ducatel, N.P., March 15, 1854, Notarial Archives.
23. J. Cuvillier, N.P., July 22, 1847; J.F. Meunier, N.P., June 4, 1880 and July 2, 1894; F.D. Charbonnet, N.P., August 25, 1925; Sol Weiss, N.P. September 16, 1926, Notarial Archives.
24. See Robin, C. C. (Charles-Cesar) and Rafinesque, C. S. (Constantine Samuel), 1783-1840. *Florula ludoviciana; or, A flora of the state of Louisiana*. Tr., rev., and improved from the French of C. C. Robin, by C. S. Rafinesque ... New York, C. Wiley & co., 1817.



## Mount Vernon - 2000: SGHS 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

by J. Dean Norton, Horticulturist, Mount Vernon Estate

**I**t will be a pleasure to again welcome the Southern Garden History Society to Mount Vernon for its eighteenth-annual meeting in 2000. This meeting promises to be informative, entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable. Our headquarters will again be the Old Towne Holiday Inn, in the heart of beautiful and historic Old Town Alexandria. Our meeting will start Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 p.m. with afternoon lectures in the magnificent George Washington Masonic Temple auditorium. The Temple is a five-minute drive from the hotel and sits on a hill with a



commanding view of the city of Alexandria. Topics covered during our afternoon sessions include: plant movement during the eighteenth century, herbs for the kitchen garden and medicinal needs, flower arrangements, and fruits - all relating to the availability and needs of those from the past. Upon returning to the Holiday Inn we will walk to Gatsby's Tavern. Gatsby's was built in 1770 and was frequented by George Washington. We will start with social time at 7:00 and at 8:30 the tavern will be ours for dining and camaraderie for the rest of the evening.

On Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> we will walk to the dock in Alexandria for our own private boat ride to Mount Vernon Estate. Upon arrival we will tour the new pioneer farmer site and proceed to the estate's administrative offices for two lectures before lunch. Lectures during the day will cover eighteenth-century agriculture, the landscapes of Rose Greely and other early twentieth-century Georgetown gardens, restoration of seventeenth- to twentieth-century brick and stone, and a close look at the landscape of America's house: the White House. For lunch we will travel five miles down the road to River

*continued on page 12...*



## The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers Bear Gifts to Mount Vernon

**A**n ancient British society of fruit traders and growers arrived at George Washington's Mount Vernon on October 9th, 1999 to plant heirloom varieties of fruit trees in a ceremony worthy of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Dressed in full regalia, including black and green robes and velvet caps, members of the Worshipful Company of Fruiterers are continuing a tradition dating to the early 1400s. The company still sends forth its officers to historic gardens like a band of knights errant, finding and planting obscure and coveted varieties of fruit trees. The ceremonial shovel has been used by Queen Elizabeth and other members of the royal family, including fellow company member Prince Charles. The members (called liverymen) are leading specialists in the global marketplace of fruit breeding, growing, and trading. When they discovered that Dean Norton, Mount Vernon's director of horticulture, was searching for varieties Washington grew at his Virginia estate, the fruiterers came to the rescue. The ceremonial tree planting in the Upper Garden featured the Gloucester White apple; a Duke cherry; and a pear named Pound. This winter scion wood of approximately twenty other varieties on Dean Norton's wish list will be brought from England by fruit breeder Will Sibley. According to Norton, "The Fruiterers have expanded our ability to bring back trees Washington had mentioned that we couldn't find."

[taken from October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1999 Washington Post article, "Bearing Gifts," by Adrian Higgins.] ♣

## Of Interest

### Farewell to Last Liberty Tree

The nation's last Liberty Tree, a famed 400-year old tulip poplar on the campus of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, fell to the arborists' saw following a ceremony in its honor on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1999. The tree, whose trunk was already hollowed by age, was badly damaged from Hurricane Floyd in September, which left a fifteen-foot fracture in its main trunk. Although the tree still stood majestically, showing few outward signs of the decrepitude that often hallmarks historically significant trees, a succession of experts deemed the tree unsafe and made the death verdict. Two hundred and twenty-four years ago, the tree was the site of American revolutionaries who plotted to throw all the British royalists out of town. At that time, every large city in the American colonies had a Liberty Tree or Liberty Pole, which served as a meeting place for the radicals who sought to defy British rule. During the Revolutionary War, the British chopped down many Liberty Trees and others, over time, succumbed to disease and age. The Annapolis tulip poplar was the nation's last survivor.



## Mount Vernon

*continued from page 11*



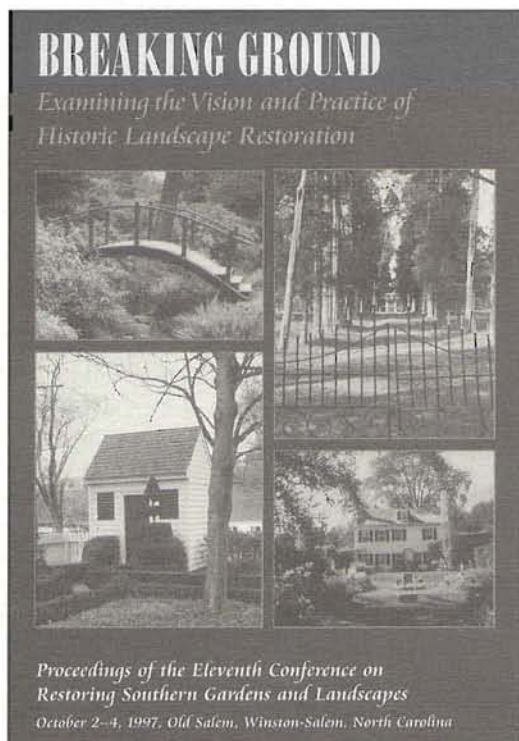
Farm, the site of one of Washington's original five farms and now the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society. After two afternoon lectures we will begin a delightful evening on the grounds of Mount Vernon Estate. Members will be able to enjoy quiet mansion tours, wagon rides around the serpentine avenues, games, entertainment, and a bird's-eye view of the estate from a hot air balloon.

Sunday's afternoon tours will include the grounds of Dumbarton Oaks; Oak Hill Cemetery; Hillwood Museum, the home of the late Mrs. Marjorie Merriweather Post; and The National Cathedral.

We anxiously await your arrival on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of 2000, to Mount Vernon, Virginia where genteel Southern hospitality will abound.

## IN PRINT

**Breaking Ground: Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration**, the Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, October 2-4, 1997, Old Salem, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. 1999. 157 pages. ISBN 1-879704-06-4. \$12.95 (add 6% sales tax for NC orders) plus \$3.50 for postage. [Copies available through Old Salem, Inc., Box 10400, Winston Salem, NC 27108 Attn. Mail Order. Phone orders: (800) 822-5151. For more information or



information on wholesale orders, Contact Kay Bergey, conference coordinator, (336) 721-7378]

Every other October the Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference takes place at Old Salem, located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Old Salem offers an

excellent venue for this conference: this restored center of Moravian community life is famed for its pioneering efforts in the areas of garden restoration and historic horticulture. Dating back to the initial program in 1979, the Old Salem conference has covered an immense array of topics pertaining to garden history. Presentations have ranged from panel discussions on African American landscapes, to explorations of the *mentalité* of famous gardeners of the past, to practical workshops on historic plants.

In 1995, the conference planning committee began the publication of proceedings, thereby achieving a long-held goal of committee members. The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Chicago, Illinois, along with the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, also saw the importance of proceedings. Both organizations provided grant assistance for the first volume: proceedings from "The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape," held October 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

In planning the 1997 conference, committee members realized the remarkable expansion of our field since the first conference in 1979. The committee therefore decided to focus the 1997 program on the variety of theoretical approaches that guide both garden/landscape historical scholarship as well as actual "hands-on" projects involving historic sites. Thus evolved "Breaking Ground: Examining the Vision and Practice of Historic Landscape Restoration."

Under the leadership of Darrell Spencer, then the director of horticulture at Old Salem, the committee arranged for presentations by some of the nation's leading historic landscape authorities. The result was a program held October 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 1997, that included talks, tours, and a workshop that thoroughly probed the conference theme. Now, following the precedent that was established by the 1995 proceedings, the 1997 presentations are also being made available to a wider audience, this time with the assistance of a grant from the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training.

This volume includes scholarly essays from many familiar Southern Garden History Society members: Rudy Favretti,

*continued on page 13...*



## IN PRINT

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Catherine Howett, Kent Brinkley, Peter Hatch, and Allan Brown. Robert Page provides a National Parks Service perspective, while Mary Hughes, Gene Capps, and Dale Jaeger give in-depth case studies. It is hoped readers will agree that this conference, with its title of "Breaking Ground," truly covered an impressive area of "fertile ground."

- Kenneth M. McFarland, conference committee member

The 1995 Proceedings of the Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference: **The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape** is available for \$10 (add 6% for NC orders) plus \$3.50 postage through the Old Salem address cited above.

Conference booklet of the seventeenth annual meeting of the Southern Garden History Society, which was held in Houston, Texas, March 26-28, may be ordered from SGHS headquarters at the address on the back of *Magnolia*. Titled "Expect the Unexpected: The Greener Side of Texas," the seventy-page booklet includes an article on the Houston landscape, abstracts of the speakers talks and the speakers biographies, a description of gardens and neighborhoods visited during the meeting, and a list of registrants. The proceedings are \$5.00 a copy, including postage.

## Other Books by SGHS Members

SGHS board member Ed Givhan and his wife Peggy have recently published **Conversations with a Southern Gardener** (Beech Hill, 1999). The Givhans, who were recognized in the Silver Anniversary Edition of *Southern Living* (March 1990) as one of ten outstanding Southern gardeners, have written this book strictly for gardeners in the Deep South. The *Southern Gardener* combines practical how-to advice with personal anecdotes of their gardening experiences. Other books by Ed Givhan include *Flowers for South Alabama Gardens*, 1980, and *Heritage Gardens: Restoring the Landscape and Gardens around your Historical Home* (with George Stritikus), 1992.

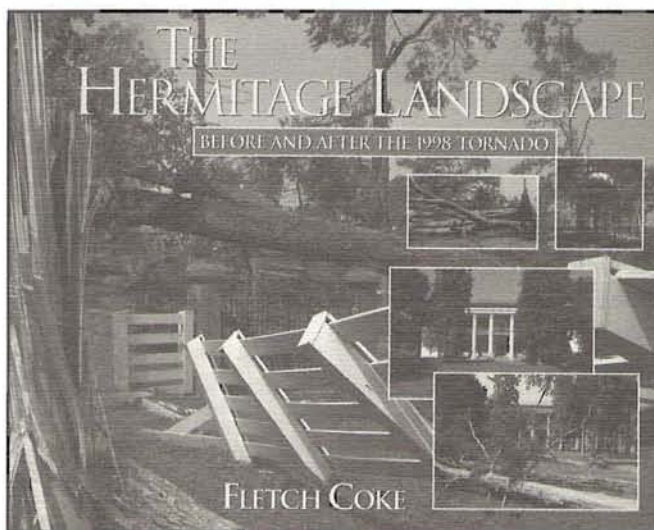
Kay K. Moss is author of **Southern Folk Medicine, 1750-1820**, recently published by the University of South Carolina Press. Her book inventories the medical ingredients and practices adopted by physicians, herb women, yeomen farmers, plantation mistresses, merchants, tradesmen, preachers, and quacks alike. The book includes an extensive alphabetized guide to medicinal plants, their scientific names, and their traditional uses. It may be ordered through USC

Press, (800) 768-2500. Ms. Moss directs the Eighteenth-Century Backcountry Lifeways Studies Programs at Schiele Museum of National History in Gastonia, North Carolina. She spoke at the 1995 Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes conference in Old Salem, and her lecture is published in the proceedings of that conference.

Starr Ockenga's book, **Earth on Her Hands: The American Woman in Her Garden** was featured in the May/June 1999 issue of *The American Gardener*. Her book, a collection of profiles of eighteen American women who have created outstanding gardens over several decades, masterfully combines strong photography, writing, and book design. (Clarkson N. Potter, New York, publisher. 1998. 239 pages. \$55.)

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Hermitage Landscape: Before and after the 1998 Tornado**, by Fletch Coke. Providence House Publishers, Hillsboro Press, 64 pages, color illustrations, (ISBN: 1-57736-140-7) \$14.95



On Thursday afternoon, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1998, one of several tornadoes, which crossed through Nashville and middle Tennessee, swept over the grounds of The Hermitage, President Andrew Jackson's estate at the edge of the city. Lasting but a minute or so, the swirling path of the storm left destruction in its wake. Over 1,200 trees were lost on the presidential property; nearly one third of that number (296)

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## BOOK REVIEW

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were red cedars, including many of the great trees planted in 1838 by President Jackson to line the guitar-shaped approach to the house. Tulip poplars, the other staple of the Southern plantation landscape, were the second greatest casualty: 174 were lost. The storm claimed also 121 sugar maples, the last of the old hickories shading the Classical Revival-style temple completed in 1833 over Rachel Jackson's grave, and the oldest beech tree in Davidson County, Tennessee. Society members who attended the 1998 annual meeting in Asheville, North Carolina a few weeks later will remember Fletch Coke's slides showing damages inflicted on the historic garden and grounds of The Hermitage and her impassioned plea for assistance. Mrs. Coke, a former regent and board member of the Ladies Hermitage Association and chair of its mansion and grounds restoration, has been a critical figure in its preservation. Now, she has recounted a year's initial experience in repairing the antebellum plantation in *The Hermitage Landscape: Before and after the 1998 Tornado*.

Ironically, the tornado occurred at a time when the Ladies Hermitage Association, a society of female stewards modeled on the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, was considering changes in the appearance of the property they had owned and managed since 1899. In February, only two months before the tornado, the board of directors had voted to undertake a long-range project to research the site's landscape history and to restore the gardens and grounds to a more appropriate nineteenth-century appearance. Their goal was to remove the twentieth-century Colonial Revival landscape elements and to recreate the plantation's antebellum appearance during the period when it was home to President Jackson (who died in 1845) until his son, Andrew Jackson, Jr.'s death in 1865. If any silver lining existed in the shadows of such a catastrophe, it could be seen in the discussion leading up to that decision, and the fact that the mansion, the rotunda in the garden cemetery, and Tulip Grove (the Donelson House) were virtually unscathed in the storm.

Cognizant of the problems with historical authenticity of improvements and plantings made earlier in this century, the board was primed to use documentary research and archaeological investigation as guides for the proposed restoration of the landscape at The Hermitage. When disaster struck, the tornado indiscriminately destroyed both historic trees and inappropriate plantings. Although there can be no sufficient mitigation for the loss of the cedars lining the drive, the hickory and magnolia trees in the cemetery grove, the tulip poplars on the lawn of Tulip Grove, and hundreds of other plants and trees with historical associations, the storm did take down some trees and plants that did not contribute to the historic antebellum character of The Hermitage and for which sentiment might have precluded their easy, eventual removal.

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## Fall Board Meeting at Old Salem

submitted by Flora Ann Bynum, Secretary

At the fall meeting of the SGHS board of directors, held October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Old Salem immediately following the conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, Dean Norton outlined plans for the upcoming SGHS annual meeting at Mount Vernon, Virginia, May 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Dean Norton, horticulturist for Mount Vernon, is chair of the annual meeting and Gail Griffin, of Dumbarton Oaks in Georgetown, is serving as board adviser.

Plans were reviewed for the nineteenth-annual meeting to be held at Tryon Palace, New Bern, North Carolina, May 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001, with Carleton Wood as chair.

Board member Elizabeth M. Boggess outlined tentative plans for the twentieth annual meeting in Natchez, Mississippi, April 18<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>, 2002. A committee to make special plans for the society's twentieth anniversary is composed of Harriet Jansma and Peter Hatch with Peggy Cornett and Nancy Haywood as co-chairs.

Gordon Chappell reported that progress was being made on the society's proposed historic plant list for the South. He emphasized that in order to include a plant on the list, he needs the place and date it was grown and the source for this information.

Dr. William C. Welch, chair of publications, reported that *Nouveau Jardinier* was at the Louisiana State University Press, and he hopes for a publication date in 2000. This early French gardening book has been translated for the society by Sally K. Reeves of the New Orleans Notarial Archives.

Peggy Cornett proposed the creation of full sets of all *Magnolia* issues for interested members and institutions. A final decision will be announced in the Winter, 2000 issue.

A progress report was given by the committee of the board that is investigating a Web site for the society. Serving on the committee are Peggy Cornett, Harriet Jansma, Perry Mathewes, and Kenneth McFarland, as chair.

## Magnolia Back Issues

Individual back issues of *Magnolia* are available through SGHS headquarters for \$5.00 (including postage). Send check with exact issue citation to: SGHS, Attn. Kay Bergey, Old Salem, Drawer F, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.



## BOOK REVIEW

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The ladies and staff of The Hermitage reacted quickly and intelligently to the crisis. A week and one day after the tornado struck, John T. Hooper, a professional photographer, was recording the wrecked landscape by air and on foot. In the book, Mr. Hooper's photographs appear in counterpoint to documentary black-and-white (and some color) photographs dating from the 1880s to the present. Mrs. Coke recounts the history of The Hermitage in three narratives supplemented by descriptions and accounts penned by travelers, visitors, and family members. These documentary remembrances are joined with another series of personal accounts recalling the events of that fateful Thursday and the following days when gardeners from Cheekwood, staff from the National Park Service and the Tennessee Department of Forestry, and arborists from the Morris Arboretum (in Philadelphia) joined the staff in the massive clean-up and salvage operation.

In his afterward James M. Vaughan, executive director of The Hermitage, acknowledges the long year and expense required to return The Hermitage landscape to its nineteenth-century appearance. At the center of this slim, but valuable book Mrs. Coke recounts a similar period in the history of the place when President Jackson, in his correspondence from Washington D.C., worried over improvements to the spot in the southeast corner of The Hermitage garden where his beloved Rachel was buried on Christmas Eve 1828. Six years and six months would pass before he could write to his son on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1835, expressing satisfaction:

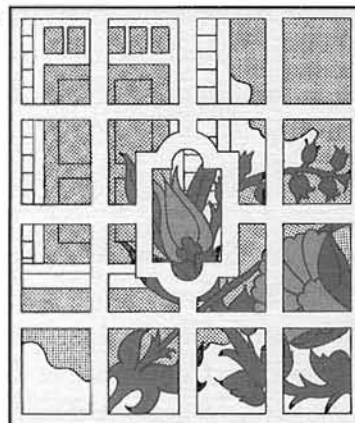
How I am delighted to hear that the garden has regained its former appearance that it always possessed whilst your dear mother was living and that just attention is now paid to her monument. This is truly pleasing to me and is precisely as it ought to be.

Might another book in the years to come illustrate a repaired and restored landscape to which the same approval can be paid?

Davyd Foard Hood, Book Review Editor  
Vale, North Carolina ♦

## Plans and Plants of the Southern Landscape

The twelfth conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, held at Old Salem in Winston-Salem, North Carolina on September 30<sup>th</sup> - October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999, was a tremendous success. Plans are underway to publish the valuable proceedings of this conference in book form and a review of this conference will be published in the Winter 2000 issue of *Magnolia*.



## Second Dues Notice

Second notices for dues were sent the week of August 26<sup>th</sup> to those members who have not paid their dues for the 1999-2000 year. First renewal notices were mailed in May. The society's year runs from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>. Members who have not paid their dues for the current year are urged to renew.

## Annual Membership Dues

Benefactor	\$250	Joint/husband-wife	\$30
Patron	\$150	Individual	\$20
Sustainer	\$75	Student	\$5
Institution/Business	\$30		
Life membership	\$1,000 (one time)		

The membership year runs from May 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. Members joining after January 1<sup>st</sup> will be credited for the coming year beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>. Write to membership secretary at: **Southern Garden History Society, Old Salem, Inc., Drawer F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108.** phone (336) 721-7328.



## Members in the News



The November/December issue of *Horticulture* magazine contains a review by Roger Swain of **The Fruits and Fruit Trees of Monticello** the 1998 book by SGHS president **Peter Hatch** (University Press of Virginia; 222 pages, \$39.95).

Several SGHS members were on the program for "The Exceptional American Garden: Past, Present, & Future," The Garden Conservancy's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference & Celebration, held in Charleston, South Carolina, October 21<sup>st</sup> -24<sup>th</sup>. These members include: **Francis H. Cabot** of Cold Spring, New York, founder and president of The Garden Conservancy; **Lucinda Brockway** of

Kennebunk, Maine; SGHS board member **James R. Cothran** of Atlanta, Georgia; and **Suzanne Turner** of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Conference participants also toured Boone Hall Plantation with horticulturist and rosarian **Ruth Knopf** and toured specialty nurseries with **Patti McGee**.

**Deen Day Smith** of Norcross, Georgia, a life member of SGHS, is serving as president of the National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc.

**Rusty Van Pelt**, of Greensboro, North Carolina, is president of The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.

Peter J. Hatch,, *President*  
Kenneth M. McFarland, *Vice-President*  
Flora Ann Bynum, *Secretary-Treasurer*

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